

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P 311954Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9020
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTREAL 867

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: PARTI QUEBECOIS BIENNIAL CONVENTION

SUMMARY: PARTI QUEBECOIS CONVENTION APPARENTLY LESS CONTENTIOUS THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, BUT PRESS REPORTS ON THIS DIFFER. PREMIER LEVESQUE, IN STRONG STATEMENT, SAID GOQ WOULD NOT FEEL "BOUND" BY RESOLUTION WITH WHICH IT DISAGREED, SPECIFICALLY ABORTION-ON-DEMAND, BUT IMPLICATION CLEAR THIS CONCEPT APPLIES TO OTHER "DISAPPOINTING" RESOLUTIONS. WHILE UPHOLDING CONCEPT OF PACIFISM, PARTY DROPPED PLANK "TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO AND NORAD." PARTY ALSO APPROVED RESOLUTION PERMITTING GOQ SEEK GREATEST POSSIBLE "AUTONOMY" WHILE STILL A PROVINCE, IN CONTRAST TO PRIOR POLICY OF NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA BEFORE REFERENDUM APPROVING INDEPENDENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. PARTI QUEBECOIS ENDED TWO-DAY MARATHON CONVENTION WITH RELATIVELY FEW OF ANTICIPATED SHOWDOWNS BETWEEN MODERATES IN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY MILITANTS. LATTER GAVE EVIDENCE OF UNHAPPINESS ON SOME SCORES BUT APPEARED GENERALLY STILL EITHER IN EUPHORIA OVER WIN IN NOVEMBER OR, AT LEAST, NOT YET READY ARGUE EXTENSIVELY WITH SUCCESS.

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2. DESPITE PROVISION IN PARTY CONSTITUTION CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO OBSERVE PARTY POLICY, PREMIER LEVESQUE STATED FLATLY GOQ WOULD NOT FEEL BOUND BY RESOLUTION ENDORSING ABORTION ON DEMAND. IMPLICATION IT WILL REACT SIMILARLY TO OTHER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH IT DISAPPROVES WAS REINFORCED BY COMMENT OF MINISTER LAURIN THAT DEMAND FOR PHASING OUT OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS "WOULD BE

CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT, JUST AS SUBMISSIONS ON THE LANGUAGE LEGISLATION WOULD BE CONSIDERED ..." MILITANTS ALSO WON ON RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR STRONGER NO-FAULT INSURANCE LEGISLATION THAN THAT PROPOSED BY GOQ AND ON DENIAL OF LAND CLAIMS OF NATIVE PEOPLES, BUT THESE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SUFFER SAME FATE.

3. LAND CLAIMS ISSUE APPARENTLY ONE OF "TACTICAL ERROR" (LEVESQUE'S TERM). MILITANTS WISHING DEFEAT NATO/NORAD RESOLUTION FILIBUSTERED ON LAND CLAIMS ITEM, HOPING USE UP ALL AVAILABLE TIME. RESULT WAS DEFEAT OF LATTER, WHILE RESOLUTION REMOVING PARTY PLANK TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO/NORAD PASSED EASILY. MINISTERS CLAUDE MORIN AND BERNARD LANDRY HAD BOTH PLUGGED FOR NEW STAND ON NATO/NORAD, STRESSING THAT EUROPEAN LEADERS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ON THE MATTER.

4. NOT LEAST INTRIGUING RESOLUTION WAS THAT ENDORSING A POLICY OF "AUTONOMY" DURING THE PERIOD LEADING TO REFERENDUM AND INDEPENDENCE. (TERM AUTONOMY LONG ASSOCIATED WITH MAURICE DUPLESSIS' GOVERNMENT OF THE 1940'S - 50'S.) RESOLUTION IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH PRIOR POLICY OF NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA UNTIL REFERENDUM APPROVING INDEPENDENCE. RESOLUTION SPONSORED BY GOQ DESIGNED, LEVESQUE SAID, TO PERMIT GOQ ACT AS A NORMAL PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT UNTIL INDEPENDENCE. WHATEVER ITS PURPOSE, IT HAS PROVOKED A FAIR AMOUNT OF SPECULATION RE COMMITMENT TO SEPARATION. ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION ENHANCED BY ANNOUNCEMENT DAY CONVENTION BEGAN OF NEW AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON SHARED FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL POWERS IN IMMIGRATION FIELD.

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5. RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ANTI-SCAB LAW APPARENTLY ENDORSEMENT OF POLICY ENUNCIATED EARLIER BY GOQ BUT NOT PREVIOUSLY IN PARTY PLATFORM. IT WILL NOT SIT WELL WITH BUSINESSMEN WOODED AT LAST WEEK'S ECONOMIC SUMMIT.

6. MILITANTS DID OBVIOUSLY SCORE IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS. DESPITE STRONG OPPOSITION FROM PREMIER LEVESQUE, MNA GUY BISAILLON AND FOREMOST FEMINIST MILITANT LOUISE THIBOUTOT BOTH ELECTED AND, ACCORDING MONTREAL-CENTRE REGIONAL PRESIDENT, CENTRE CANDIDATES OR ALLIES TOOK THIRTEEN OF THE FIFTEEN SEATS AVAILABLE.

7. PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN MIXED, ANGLOPHONE PAPERS TENDING SEE MILITANTS OVERLY POWERFUL, FRANCOPHONE MEDIA FINDING LEVESQUE IN CONTROL AND CONVENTION GENERALLY CHARACTERIZED BY MODERATION. (COMMENT: DISCUSSION OVER "WHO WON" WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. WE INCLINED AGREE WITH FRANCOPHONE REACTION AND FIND ANGLO PRESS ASSESSMENT OF RADICAL STRENGTH OVERDRAWN. PASSING RESOLUTIONS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD BUT, IF GOVERNMENT IS NOT GOING TO FOLLOW THEM, SOMETHING OF A HOLLOW VICTORY.

LEVESQUE IS ALREADY WARNING OF POSSIBLE SPLIT IN PARTY IF DIS-
AGREEMENT ON ISSUES CONTINUES.)

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8. MOST OF MORE THAN 2000 RESOLUTIONS ON AGENDA NEVER GOT
BEYOND WORKSHOP COMMITTEES, ONLY 129 BEING VOTED ON IN PLENARY.
EVEN SO, MUCH CONFUSION WAS ENGENDERED BY TOO MANY CONSIDERATIONS
IN TOO SHORT TIME, PROMPTING CALLS FOR LONGER SESSION TWO YEARS
FROM NOW PLUS NEW PROCEDURES TO MAKE CONTROL MORE MANAGEABLE.
(RULES ALREADY STRICT, LIMITING DEBATE TO ONE SPEAKER EACH PRO
AND CON.) CONFUSION COMPOUNDED BY TERRIBLE ACOUSTICS SO THAT
NO ONE -- AND MOST ESPECIALLY THE PUBLIC ADMITTED AS SPECTATORS
-- COULD REALLY TELL WHAT WAS GOING ON.

9. ACCORDING CONOFF WHO ATTENDED AS SPECTATOR, SCENE IN DELEGATE
SECTION RESEMBLED SOCIAL OCCASION WITH MUCH MILLING ABOUT,
HAND-SHAKING, ETC. THIS COULD, OF COURSE, HAVE BEEN LOBBYING.
THERE WAS NO SENSE OF EXCITEMENT HE COULD DISCERN, NO APPLAUSE
FOR DEBATERS OR AFTER VOTES. HE NOTED THAT OTHER SPECTATORS,
NUMBERING NOT OVER 300, APPEARED HAVE MORE INTEREST IN HOT DOGS
AND COFFEE THAN IN PROCEEDINGS, POSSIBLY BECAUSE (AS NOTED ABOVE)
THEY COULD NOT HEAR CLEARLY.
HARPER

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